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ABSTRACT

This program, included in "Effective Reading Programs....," serves 115 disadvantaged children in first through third grade and includes black, Filipino, white, and Spanish-surname students. Begun in 1965, Total Reading is a complete language arts program for the primary grades which integrates the teaching of reading, writing, spelling, and speech. Decoding skills are taught phonetically, using a vowel code to unlock the sound of a word. Strong emphasis is given to comprehension and vocabulary growth. Dictation techniques are used to provide oral readiness at each step; students are then able to work independently on materials based on the sounds and words introduced. Materials include a teacher's manual, dictation record, sound and word cards, student workbooks, reading books, and tests. The program also utilizes library books and regular basal readers. The program is divided into five levels. The focus at levels one and two is on decoding of words with oral preparation for reading comprehension and creativity; at level three, on reading comprehension and sentence writing; and at level four, on spelling and creative writing. Level five is programed to teach advanced language arts skills to high-achieving third graders.
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THE TOTAL READING PROGRAM AT JUAN CABRILLO SCHOOL
Seaside City Schools, Calif.

Total Reading is a program which integrates the teaching of reading, writing, spelling and speech based upon the understanding of the phonetic components of the English language.

The program is based upon the long years of research by Dr. Samuel Orton, a pioneer in the field of developmental dyslexia. Mrs. Romalda Spaulding through her work and association with Dr. Orton developed a method of teaching reading called "The Writing Road to Reading." The present program which is in use in many schools in the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District was written by Mrs. Mary Minor Johnston and Mrs. Polly Minor Scanlon. The original program "Unified Phonics" was improved and developed in several of our elementary schools into the program as we have it today.

It has been recognized that not all children learn in the same way. Therefore, this program does not rely on any one approach, but teaches reading and correlated language through visual, aural and kinesthetic learning. Through this multi-sensory approach, the child is able to use his own strengths in learning to read, write and spell.

This program fosters early independence in reading. It allows the child to develop skills which enable him to unlock new words for himself through a decoding process. Thus, the child can proceed at his own speed according to his own ability.

Each stage of development in this reading and language arts program is preceded by an oral preparation. (Just as the child learns to speak before he is ready to learn to read.) Oral comprehension precedes reading comprehension; oral sentence structure precedes the written; and oral creativity precedes creative writing.

The program has been divided into several levels. As a child masters one level, he proceeds on to the next. An average first grade child will complete the first three levels.

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LEVEL I

In this level, the child learns the sounds of all the letters of the alphabet by writing and saying them on prepared practice papers. Much emphasis is placed on the correct form in writing from the very start, and the letters are introduced in an order determined by how they are formed. As the children are taught how to make "clocks, starting at two," they begin learning the sounds of the first three letters. When they have mastered the skill in making "clocks," they learn to write the sounds they have learned and proceed in learning additional sounds at the rate of two to three a day. The rate of progression is determined by the ability of the children. If necessary, a teacher may spend two or more days on each lesson.

The letters or sounds are introduced in the following* order:

letters that "start at two on the clock:" a, c, d, f, g, o, qu, s

letters that "start with a line and sit close:" b, e, h, i, j, k,
l, m, n, p, r, t, u, v, w, x, y, z.

Then, the "vowel code" is taught and memorized, learning each individual sound with its short, long or dotted marking:

a, a, a; e, e; i, i; o, o, o; u, u, u.

Throughout this level much work is done on oral creativity and comprehension. Stories are read to the children with questions asked, which paves the way for later reading comprehension. The children may enact these or other familiar stories as well as make up stories of their own, often stimulated by their art work. Children also learn to retell stories from picture books.

LEVEL II

The children begin to learn the phonograms, which include diphthongs and vowel and consonant diagraphs, at the rate of one or two a day. Beginning reading words are dictated by the teacher. These words are written sound by sound by the children and marked with the vowel code and consonant sounds, when necessary. While the child is analyzing words through this dictation method, he is taught certain generalizations or spelling rules as they occur in these words. New words are introduced at a rate appropriate to the ability of the child - up to eight a day. Meaning is never neglected. Words are introduced and used in sentences and meanings discussed whenever necessary.

After the fifth lesson, the child receives a word pack containing all words previously introduced. When these words have been mastered by sight, the child reads sentences using these words individually to his teacher.

Upon completion of three such word packs and their sentences, the child is given his first pre-primer to read for pleasure. Thus, the initial introduction to reading books is a pleasurable experience, rather than a frustrating one.

The teacher continues to introduce words through dictation as the child continues mastery of the last two word packs and their short stories, which must also be matched to pictures to indicate comprehension. The rest of the pre-primers and primers are read at an individual rate, but are also shared in group reading situations at least twice a week.

Oral language development continues through many varied activities as in Level I and as the child learns to use words in complete sentences in preparation for the written form in Level III.

LEVEL III

The child is introduced to new words in dictation which are ever more complex. He also learns the rest of the phonograms and more spelling rules or generalizations. After each dictation lesson, the child either writes his own sentences using words from his lesson that day, using his knowledge of phonics to sound out any words he does not know how to spell; or he copies over his sentences from the day before with their corrections. The child is given his easiest spelling errors as spelling words to master. Thus, each child is met with a challenge that matches his own ability and encouragement can be given for using words that are in his speaking vocabulary, but beyond the expectations of his knowledge of spelling.

After reading a first reader, the child progresses to books which have been developed to go with this program as readiness for written comprehension. The first of these is found in the workbook for Level III, Kit and Kat (the Dutch Twins). Then he reads I Can Read By Myself with comprehension questions for each story in the Level III workbook. Records are also kept of the library and supplementary books that have been read and satisfactorily reported to some adult (parent, helping mother, aide, teacher).

The child also continues working on oral creativity to prepare him for the next written steps to be found in Level IV.

LEVEL IV

In this level, spelling rules or generalizations are studied in structured lessons. The phonograms and their usage in words are continually reviewed. More advanced words are dictated twice in each seven-day cycle for further analyzation, including more complex rules.

The children begin writing their own stories and poems without fears about spelling. Creative writing skills are taught, including good proof reading habits. Individualized spelling needs are continued to be met from the child's own writing and according to his own ability. A minimum spelling list is also studied using word analysis techniques. These words are tested both orally and in writing.

Reading for greater comprehension and speed is taught. The McGraw-Hill "New Practice Readers," Learning for Self Instruction Materials, Weekly Reader "Read, Study and Think" and primary S.R.A. kits are used, as well as comprehension materials which have been developed for use with basal readers, Junior Library books and supplementary literature books. E.D.L. Controlled Readers are used to help develop greater speed with comprehension checks.

LEVEL V

Level V is divided into seven units. In each unit there are seven lessons plus a review lesson, including a creative writing lesson, spelling rule lesson, punctuation lesson, grammar lesson and spelling words studied through phonetic analysis.

These lessons are designed for self-instruction and self-correction with individual or small group instruction given as needed by the teacher. A teacher-corrected test at the end of each unit indicates a need for review or readiness to go on to the next unit. Review lessons are prepared for each lesson which may be taught for reinforcement whenever necessary.

The child continues to read basal readers and other books with an emphasis on comprehension, speed and enjoyment! Individualized and group reading are carried on throughout the program, as has been described in Level IV.